

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 232552

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, PL, UR, NO

SUBJECT: USSR: FREEDOM OF PASSAGE

REF: A) MOSCOW 13303 B) MOSCOW 13499 C) OSLO 4137

1. INR HAS PREPARED FOLLOWING BRIEF ANALYSIS IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUERY REF C. YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO PASS THESE THOUGHTS TO NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS AT YOUR DISCRETION.

2. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, RECENT SOVIET EMPHASIS ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE IN LOS-RELATED MATTERS IS NOT NEW, AND IS LOGICALLY CONSISTENT WITH LONGSTANDING SOVIET POSITIONS.

WE BELIEVE THE ACCUMULATION OF EVIDENCE CITED IN REF A (THE AEGEAN QUESTION, DIFFERENCE IN SOVIET AND POLISH
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APPROACHES TO LOS, THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE IDEA,

ETC.) REFLECTS A HIGHLIGHTING OF THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET STAND ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE, OCCASIONED BY A COINCIDENTAL SET OF DEVELOPMENTS, RATHER THAN A NEW DEPARTURE.

3. THE SOVIET POSITION ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE HAS TRADITIONALLY INCLUDED SUPPORT FOR:

-- A 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE, WHICH WOULD LIMIT THE

COASTAL STATE'S SOVEREIGNTY TO CONTROL OVER MINERAL AND FISHERY RESOURCES, BUT WOULD NOT AFFECT THE FREE PASSAGE OF SHIPS BEYOND THE 12-MILE TERRITORIAL WATER LIMIT; AND

-- FREE, UNIMPEDED PASSAGE THROUGH STRAITS AND INTERNATIONAL WATERWAYS.

4. TO FRAME THE QUESTION IN TERMS OF THE EFFECT THIS ALLEGEDLY "NEW" SOVIET STRESS ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE MIGHT HAVE ON THE BARENTS SEA-SVALBARD ISSUE MAY, THEREFORE, BE SOMEWHAT MISLEADING. AS A GLOBAL MARITIME AND NAVAL POWER, THE USSR LOGICALLY FAVORS THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE PASSAGE AND A NARROW INTERPRETATION OF ECONOMIC ZONES AND TERRITORIAL WATERS. ON THE BARENTS SEA-SVALBARD ISSUE, MOREOVER, THIS GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF FREE PASSAGE IS ESPECIALLY GERMANE, SINCE IT WORKS IN FAVOR OF THE USSR'S PRIMARY INTEREST IN THE REGION -- I.E., UNMONITORED, UNHINDERED PASSAGE FOR ITS NORTHERN FLEET THROUGH THE BARENTS SEA TO THE OPEN WATERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC. IN THIS REGARD, WE CONCUR WITH THE OPINION VOICED IN REF B THAT THE USSR'S CHIEF INTEREST IN THE BARENTS SEA IS MILITARY-STRATEGIC, WITH ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS BEING SECONDARY. IN SHORT, AN EMPHASIS ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE APPROACH WHICH MOSCOW HAS TAKEN ON THE BARENTS SEA QUESTION FROM THE BEGINNING. ROBINSON

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